

TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome!!

The staff and volunteers of the Toronto Botanical Garden staff welcome you! We hope you will enjoy your participation here.

Volunteers are essential to all aspects of Toronto Botanical Garden. We would not be where we are today without the dedication, commitment, integrity and professionalism of our volunteers.

This Volunteer handbook is a resource guide to provide you with information about Toronto Botanical Garden, including descriptions of our core programs, services, general staff and volunteer responsibilities.

Welcome to the Toronto Botanical Garden volunteer team.

Mandate

Toronto Botanical Garden (TBG), formerly the Civic Garden Centre, was founded in 1958 and incorporated in 1963. We are a volunteer-based, charitable organization whose mission is to connect people, plants and the natural world through education, inspiration and leadership.

Our vision is to encourage, stimulate and teach adults and children with beautiful and innovative garden landscapes, nature-centred educational programs and environmentally friendly practices.

History

- 1827: Alexander Milne, a loyalist, settled on the site and built several mills which his family operated for over 100 years.
- 1944: Rupert E. Edwards purchased the property and transformed it into a private garden and golf course.
- 1956: Mr. Edwards sold the property to the City of Toronto for \$153,000 to protect it from residential development. 'Edwards Gardens' was officially opened to the public, with the name reflecting the fact Mr. Edwards could have received more money by selling to developers.
- 1958: The Garden Club of Toronto and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists were headquartered in the old Milne House on the property.
- 1962: Milne House was destroyed by fire and Metro Council approved funds to establish the Civic Garden Centre in a building to be owned and maintained by Metro.
- 1964: The building designed by Raymond Moriyama was completed. Funding was provided by the Garden Club of Toronto and the Meadowvale Botanical Garden Trust, with \$100,000 from Metropolitan Toronto..
- 1976: An addition designed by Jerome Markson was officially opened in December.

- 1998: Opening of the Teaching Garden in Edwards Garden – a children’s education project envisioned and donated by the Garden Club of Toronto.
- 2005: \$6 million in renovations and additions to the original buildings were completed with 20% City of Toronto funding and 80% private funding, including a lead gift from Kathy and George Dembroski for whom the Centre for Horticulture is now named. The building includes the Weston Family Library, James Boyd Children’s Centre and the Garden Shop at TBG.

General Information

TBG is open 7 days a week for 51 weeks of the year. Operating funds are generated through membership dues, foundation grants, facility rentals, art shows, plant sales, garden shop, course fees, special events, lectures and donations.

The facilities are owned by the City of Toronto, which provides a grant of \$25,000 per year to assist with maintenance, plus paying for heat and hydro and major maintenance.

TBG is governed by a volunteer board that determines TBG’s direction and policies. TBG is staffed by a small group of paid employees who manage the day to day operations. TBG departments include Horticulture, Education, Business & Finance, Marketing & Communications and Development. Other units or areas within the departments include the Library, maintenance, rentals, retail operations and volunteer coordination.

The departments are supported by over 500 volunteers in a wide variety of roles ranging from regular weekly volunteering for Reception, Library and the Garden Shop, to seasonal gardening and tour guide roles, to assisting at fund raising and special events.

TBG relies upon volunteers to help run our many programs and to meet our vision. Our volunteers take a great deal of pride in the many contributions they make and often form close teams and enjoy each others’ company for many years!

This handbook provides more information on what it means to be a volunteer at TBG, volunteer commitment and the volunteer code of conduct.

The various volunteer roles are also covered in more detail.

Programs and Services offered by TBG

Adult Education: Courses and Programs

Over 40 gardening and horticulture related courses are offered each trimester (Fall, Winter/Spring, Summer). TBG area: Adult Education

Horticultural Services

A garden information telephone line is answered regularly by Toronto Master Gardeners. The Toronto Master Gardeners have an office located in the library, which provides volunteers at the Organic Farmers market on Thursdays to answer visitors' questions during the summer months. The "Ask a Master Gardener" website is accessible from TBG's website. Soil testing service is offered at a small charge. Independent unit: Master Gardeners of Ontario, Toronto group

Lecture Series

TBG offers monthly evening lectures featuring well-known speakers from around the world. TBG area: Adult Education

Library

The Weston Family Library at TBG is Canada's largest private horticultural library with over 9,000 books, 70 periodicals and a large collection of clippings, pamphlets, nursery and seed catalogues as well as a collection of children's gardening books. The Library also has a growing collection of videos and CDs. The public may use the Library and members have free borrowing privileges. There is also a special booklovers membership category and a book club run by volunteers. The book catalogue and the subject index to periodical articles are available on-line at our website. TBG area: Library (part of Education dept.).

Major Fundraising and Special Events

The TBG department responsible for most major fund raising events is Development. Additional departments look after specific special events as indicated below.

Get the Jump on Spring

Taking place in February, this annual horticultural societies Open House features speakers, workshops and exhibits, all designed to educate and inspire gardening enthusiasts for the gardening year ahead. It is run by a volunteer committee, assisted by TBG staff. TBG dept: Business & Finance.

Canada Blooms

The largest horticultural show in North America. This show is held in conjunction with the National Home Show for 10 days in mid March. It is organized by the Garden Club of Toronto & Landscape Ontario. TBG has a retail booth (and sometimes a show garden) at this show each year. Our booth often hosts Master Gardener advice clinics, book signings and much more! TBG dept: Horticulture and Business & Finance.

The Plant Sale

Held for 4-5 days in May. TBG dept: Horticulture.

Through the Garden Gate

A very popular private garden tour attracting many visitors each year. This event is organized and run by volunteers and staff and is usually held on the second weekend in June. TBG dept: Development.

Woman to Woman

A special and stylish fundraising event including gourmet food in the gardens, a fashion show, silent auction and much more. TBG dept: Development.

Rentals

Any of the studios and auditoriums are available for rent for meetings, weddings, or special exhibits. TBG area: Rentals (part of Business & Finance dept.)

TBG Kids Education offers programs for children from preschool to grade 6. Programs include curriculum-linked class visits during the school year, March break camp, Growing Under Glass (at Allan Gardens), summer camps, and a series of nature events. TBG area: Children's Education

The Garden Shop offers unique gifts, floral art supplies and gardening books. TBG dept: Business & Finance.

Trellis Magazine

This is a quarterly newsletter, mailed to members, full of interesting articles and a calendar of events. TBG dept: Marketing & Communications.

Tours: The TBG is a one-stop shop for a variety of tours from one hour at TBG and other gardens in Toronto, to day trips in Ontario and longer garden vacations overseas with several travel providers with whom TBG partners. The local tours are led by experienced volunteer tour guides and take place in the following locations:

Allan Gardens Tours

Private group tours can be booked from late fall to Easter for a variety of seasonal displays. TBG area: Volunteer office.

Audio Tours

These are available for TBG and Edwards Gardens. Audio tours can be rented from the Garden Shop. Segments of the narrative are narrated by well known horticulture and TBG personalities. TBG area: Volunteer office.

Music Garden Tours

These are given every Wednesday at 11 am and Thursday at 5.30 pm from June to the end of September. Tours are free. Private group tours (for a nominal fee) may also be booked. TBG area: Volunteer office.

TBG and Edwards Gardens Tours

These free (pay what you can) tours are given every Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon from mid-May to the end of September. Tours cover the highlights of the plant collection and local history. Private group tours (for a nominal fee) may also be booked.

TBG area: Volunteer office.

Website

www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca has been in operation since 2000, and serves to promote TBG, listing a calendar of events, courses, and information. It is also the site for online bookings for many activities including Tours and Adult Education. TBG dept: Marketing & Communications.



Beryl Ivey knot garden

TBG Yearly Calendar of Events

Note this is a selection of the bigger/ongoing events that need volunteer help during a typical calendar year. There are many, many other smaller scale/shorter events providing additional interesting and rewarding volunteer opportunities.

In a Typical Year

Saturday in mid February – **Get the Jump on Spring**

10 days in mid March – **Canada Blooms**

Sunday in mid-April – **Earth Day**

Thursday-Monday, early to mid-May – **TBG Plant Sale**

Thursdays, in mid-May to mid-October - **Farmers Market** outdoors, Thursdays; in mid-October to mid-May continues indoors in TBG lobby.

Thursday, end May – **Woman to Woman**

Saturday-Sunday, early to mid-June– **Through the Garden Gate**

Thursday evenings, late June to end August - **Gardens of Song concerts**

Saturday, late September – **Harvest Day**

Late October/early November – **Volunteer Appreciation Party**

Thursday, early December – **Holiday Open House**



Woodland walk

Contact Information

Toronto Botanical Garden

777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario. M3C 1P2

Main number: 416-397-1340 Fax: 416-397-1354

Website: www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca

Email: info@torontobotanicalgarden.ca

Dept. or Area	Telephone No.	Email
Adult Education	416-397-1362	adulthood@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Business & Finance	416-397-1484	business@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Children's Education	416- 397 1288	childrens@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Database & IT	416-397-1371	databaseadmin@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Development	416-397-1372	development@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Garden Shop	416-397-1357	shop@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Horticulture	416-397-1358	horticulture@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Library	416-397-1343	library@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Maintenance	416-397-1344	maintenance@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Marketing & Comm.	416-397-1351	communication@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Rental	416-397-1349	rentals@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
Volunteer Services	416-397-4145	tourguides@torontobotanicalgarden.ca

Master Gardeners' Free Info Line 416-397-1345 tmg@torontobotanicalgarden.ca
(Mon. to Fri. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sat., Sun. & Holidays 12 noon to 3 p.m.)



Kitchen garden

What it means to be a TBG Volunteer

TBG's commitment to our Volunteers

The TBG Board and staff commit to adhering to the values, guiding principles and standards of practice in the **Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI)**. The CCVI principles state that **volunteers have rights**. As a nonprofit organization we recognize that volunteers are a vital human resource and commit to appropriate infrastructure to support volunteer engagement. The CCVI principles also state that **volunteers have responsibilities**; you make a commitment and are accountable to the organization. These rights and responsibilities are captured below. More on the CCVI can be found on www.volunteer.ca/content/canadian-code-volunteer-involvement.

Volunteer rights: As a volunteer you can expect:

- Full acceptance, cooperation and appreciation from TBG staff;
- A dedicated resource (s) to manage the volunteer program and act as a liaison between volunteers and TBG. This resource is there to help make your volunteer experience the best one possible, provide you with information about your volunteer role and help answer any questions you may have;
- A written volunteer role description;
- Orientation, basic training, and additional learning opportunities;
- Recognition of your volunteer efforts; and
- An up-to-date sign-up site for all volunteer opportunities.

Benefits of Volunteering at TBG

- Make important networking contacts, meet new people, make new friends;
- Work in beautiful surroundings;
- Expand your education and gain work experience;
- Contribute to your community;
- Attend special workshops/courses;
- Use the Library for reference;
- Hear about events;
- 5% discount at the Garden Shop;
- Receive Volunteer updates by email; and
- Use of self-service sign-up for volunteer opportunities/scheduling that provides immediate confirmation of booking and timely reminders.

Volunteer Reward and Recognition

In addition to the many benefits of volunteering, TBG provides recognition for volunteer achievement and contribution, including length of service, in a variety of ways. These include featuring individual volunteers and/or volunteer groups in Trellis and on TBG's website, occasional lunches/social gatherings, and an annual volunteer appreciation party.

Volunteer Commitment to TBG

Volunteer responsibilities: TBG asks all its volunteers to:

- Attend initial and ongoing training sessions
- Ensure timely completion of volunteer hours log forms (if required)
- Accept, support and comply with:
 - **TBG policies, programs and practices** as outlined in this handbook (health and safety, harassment, accessible visitor service plan & manual, confidentiality, etc.)
 - The **TBG volunteer code of conduct** (below). In particular, demonstrate respect for the public, staff and other volunteers.

TBG Volunteer Code of Conduct

It is Toronto Botanical Garden's (TBG's) role to serve its membership and the public at large. In this regard, all volunteers are expected to treat members and the public with a high degree of courtesy, efficiency and professionalism at all times and under all circumstances. All volunteers must keep in mind that they represent Toronto Botanical Garden and that their attitude, appearance and behaviour reflect on TBG and its image. Improper conduct will not be tolerated.

Should you find yourself in a situation which is difficult and cannot be handled within your comfort level or degree of TBG knowledge, you should remove yourself from the situation before responding inappropriately and should refer the problem to the Head of Volunteer Services (or another TBG staff member).

Customer Service: As a service organization, TBG depends on all volunteers to display a high degree of customer service at all times to members and the public at large.

Cooperation: The Toronto Botanical Garden is a multifaceted organization and, as such, workloads can vary from department from department. Volunteers may be asked to help other departments when required and with a cooperative spirit.

Dress Code: As representatives of Toronto Botanical Garden, all volunteers must be dressed appropriately for their volunteer role and wear identifying TBG name tags at all times. For volunteers in customer service roles, appearance must be neatly attired and cleanly groomed at all times when on duty.

Timeliness and Dependability: All volunteers are expected to be on time for their shift, punctual with respect to meetings, lunch breaks and other scheduled activities and dependable with regard to the regularity of their roles. Many volunteers operate as members of teams and these teams rely on members to be timely and dependable in order to provide smooth and efficient customer service.

TBG POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Health and Safety Policy

TBG is committed to the health and safety of its employees and volunteers. TBG is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of volunteers while working with us. TBG management will make every reasonable effort to provide a safe and healthy work environment in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

As a volunteer you are entitled to adequate training and supervision in your specific volunteer assignment(s) for the purpose of protecting your health and safety.

Volunteers must protect their health and safety, and that of their fellow volunteers and TBG staff, by working in compliance with the law and the safe work practices and procedures established by TBG.

It is in the best interest of everyone to consider health and safety a priority in every activity.

Workplace Harassment:

Every volunteer has a right to be free of discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace by the organization, its employees, its volunteers or by an agent of the organization because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, age, marital status, family status or record of offenses (prohibited by the Ontario Human Rights Code).

Discrimination, harassment and bullying are an assault on an individual's dignity and may result in negative consequences for an individual in term of health and personal safety and for the organization in terms of poor morale and decreased productivity.

If you experience a situation that makes you uncomfortable contact the Head, Volunteer Services or the TBG staff member whose department you are volunteering for. Workplace harassment is grounds for dismissal.

Full policy details are available from the Volunteer Office.



Carpet bed

Accessible Visitor Service Plan and Manual

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 and the customer service standards required by the Act, all volunteers in roles where there is interaction with members of the public must be aware of and in agreement with TBG's Accessible Visitor Service Plan and Manual.

Accessible Visitor Service Plan

Guiding principles: fostering independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity

Toronto Botanical Garden is committed to excellence in serving all visitors including people with disabilities. Additionally, customized tours are available for groups with special needs.

Assistive devices

We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are trained and familiar with assistive devices that may be used by visitors with disabilities while they are at TBG.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take their disability into account.

Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed in all parts of our premises that are open to the public.

Support persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have their support person accompany them to all parts of our premises that are open to the public.

Fees will not be charged for support persons who accompany someone with a disability solely to facilitate their participation in TBG programs and classes. (Otherwise, the support person will be charged the usual fee for the program or class.) We will notify customers of this through a notice posted at Reception, published in our Program Guides and quarterly magazine, and on TBG's website.

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for visitors with disabilities, TBG will give notice promptly. Our clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. This notice will be placed at all TBG entrances and posted on TBG's website.

Training for staff and volunteers

TBG will provide accessible visitor service training to all staff and volunteers who deal with the public.

Training will include:

- an overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 and the customer service standards required by the Act;
- TBG's accessible visitor service plan;
- guidance in how to:
 - interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- re-training whenever any changes are made to TBG's accessible visitor service plan.

Feedback process

Visitors who wish to provide feedback on the way TBG welcomes and assists people with disabilities are welcome to email, fill out a feedback card at Reception, or give their comments to a TBG staff member in person. All feedback will be directed to TBG's Director of Marketing and Communications. Correspondents can expect TBG's response to any concern within two business days. Complaints will be addressed according to our organization's regular complaint management procedures.

Modifications to this or other policies

Any TBG policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be amended or removed.

Toronto Botanical Garden

Accessible Visitor Service Manual

General context

We want every visitor, guest, student or partner to leave TBG feeling really glad they were here, whether a person has a disability or not. Everyone deserves the same friendly, respectful help to take advantage of all the opportunities at TBG.

- Always **put the person first**, not their disability. A disability is only one aspect of a life; it's not the whole person. Always think of, and refer to, a "person with a disability," not "a disabled person."
- Take care with vocabulary; think and speak with **respect**. Don't use old or judgmental terms such as "handicap," "handicapped," "crippled," "retarded" or "dumb." These words are now considered disrespectful. Use "disability" or "disabled."
- If you are not sure about the type or level of a disability, wait until the individual informs you of their situation; **don't make assumptions**. Some types of disabilities have similar characteristics, and assumptions may easily be wrong.

General tips on providing service to visitors with disabilities

- If you're not sure what to do, just ask "may I help you?" Visitors with disabilities know whether they need help and how you can most readily provide it.
- Speak directly to the visitor, not to his or her support person or companion.
- Avoid stereotypes; don't make assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities a person has. Some disabilities are not visible or immediately apparent.
- Take the time to get to know each visitor's needs, and focus on meeting those needs, just as you would with any other visitor.
- Be patient and listen carefully. People with some types of disabilities may need a little more time to process and respond.
- Learn the appropriate language and terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities.
- If you can't understand what a customer is saying, politely ask them to tell you again.
- Never touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to keep their focus.
- Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, without permission.

Visitors who have vision loss

Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision to perceive objects straight ahead. Some people can see the outlines of objects; others can see light sources and levels. Vision loss can restrict customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or notice hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or white cane, but others may not. Sometimes it may be difficult to tell if a person has vision loss.

Interacting/communicating

- Don't assume the person can't see you.
- Don't touch the visitor without asking permission.
- Offer your elbow to guide the person. If he or she accepts, walk slowly, but wait for permission before doing so. Lead – don't pull.
- Identify landmarks or details to orient the visitor to the environment around him/her.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to focus at all times.
- Don't leave your visitor in the middle of a room. Show him or her to a chair or other comfortable, anchor location such as a counter.
- If you need to leave your visitor, let him/her know you're leaving and that you'll be back soon.
- Identify yourself when you approach your visitor and speak directly to him or her, even if he/she is accompanied by a companion.
- There is usually no need to raise your voice; a person with vision loss doesn't necessarily have hearing loss. Say your name even if you know the person well, as many voices sound similar.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions – e.g., two steps behind you, a meter to your left, etc. Don't use "over there" or point.
- If you're uncertain about how best to provide directions, ask the person how to do so.
- Don't be afraid or embarrassed to use words such as "see", "read" and "look." People with vision loss also use these words.
- When providing printed information, offer to read or describe or summarize it.

Visitors who are Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing

People who are profoundly deaf may identify themselves as *culturally Deaf* or *oral deaf*. In Deaf culture, indicated by a capital "D," the term is used to describe a person who has severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no hearing.

Oral deaf is used to describe a person who was born deaf or became deaf before learning to speak, but is taught to speak and may not typically use American Sign Language.

Deafened describes a person who has lost their hearing slowly or suddenly in adulthood. Such a person may use visual cues such as captioning or computerized note-taking, speech reading or sign language.

Hard of hearing describes a person who uses their residual hearing and speech to communicate. The person may communicate by speech reading, hearing aids, sign language and/or communication devices.

Types of assistance customers may use: hearing aid, paper and pen, personal amplification device (e.g., Pocket Talker), phone amplifier, relay service, teletypewriter (TTY), hearing ear dog, support person such as a sign language interpreter.

Interacting/communicating

- Attract the visitor's attention before speaking. Generally, the best way is with a gentle wave of your hand, a warm preliminary "hello," or if absolutely necessary, a gentle touch on the hand.
- Ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Move to a well-lit area where the visitor can see your face.
- Don't put your hands in front of your face when speaking. Some people read lips.
- If necessary, ask if another way to communicate would be easier, for example, using a pen and paper.
- Be patient if you are using a pen and paper to communicate. American Sign Language may be the visitor's first language. It has its own grammatical rules and sentence structure.
- Look at and speak directly to the visitor. Address the visitor, not his/her support person.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Confirm that the visitor understands you.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area, if possible, so the person can hear or concentrate better.
- Don't assume that the visitor knows sign language or reads lips.

Visitors who are deaf blind

A person who is deaf blind can neither see nor hear to some degree. Many people who are deaf blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating.

Types of assistance visitors may use: Braille, large print, print on paper (black felt marker on non-glossy white paper or using portable white and black boards), communication boards, hearing aid, monocular or magnifiers, TTY devices, white cane, service animal, support person.

Interacting/communicating

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.

- A visitor who is deaf blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with him or her or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with him or her.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach a visitor who is deaf blind, but then speak directly to the visitor as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't suddenly touch a person who is deaf blind or touch them without permission.

Visitors with physical disabilities

Only some people with physical disabilities use a visible assistive device. Someone with a spinal cord injury, arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputation may manage quite independently but have difficulty with moving, standing, sitting or walking longer distances.

Interacting/communicating

- Ask before you help. People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things.
- Respect the visitor's personal space. Do not lean over him/her or on his/her assistive device.
- If you need to have a conversation of more than 30 seconds or so with someone who uses a wheelchair or a scooter, sit down so you can make eye contact at the same level.
- If you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing away from other people or in the path of opening doors.
- Speak naturally and directly to the visitor, not to his or her companion or support person.
- Don't touch personal items or equipment such as canes or wheelchairs without permission.
- Keep devices and equipment – your institution's items or the customer's personal items such as canes and walkers – within the visitor's convenient reach.
- If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to:
 - Wait for and follow the person's instructions;
 - Confirm that the visitor is ready to move;
 - Describe what you're going to do before you do it;
 - Avoid uneven ground and objects;
 - Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of a doorway.

- Let the visitor know about accessible features in the immediate area (i.e., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, ramps, etc.)

Visitors with mental health disabilities

Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. Mental health disabilities are not as visible as many other types of disabilities. You may not know that a visitor has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. If you sense or know that a customer has a mental health disability, be sure to treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else. If someone is experiencing difficulty controlling his or her symptoms, or is in a crisis, stay calm and reassuring and ask the visitor how you can best help.

A person with a mental health disability may have difficulty with one, several or none of these challenges: difficulty with sequences in conventional logic, hallucinations, depression, sudden mood swings, difficulty concentrating or remembering, a seeming lack of motivation.

Types of assistance a visitor might use: service animal, support person. Some service animals used for companionship/reassurance may be small animals that can be kept close, in a pocket, such as a ferret.

Interacting/communicating

- Treat anyone with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be patient.
- Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with the visitor to try to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to help.

Visitors who have intellectual or developmental disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit the person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize and take care of their everyday needs. You may not know that someone has this type of disability unless you are told. As much as possible, treat visitors with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and will always appreciate respectful treatment.

Types of assistance visitors may use: communication board, speech generating device, service animal, support person.

Interacting/communicating

- Don't make any assumptions about what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.

- To confirm whether the visitor understands what you have said, consider asking the person to repeat the message back to you in his or her own words.
- If you cannot understand what is being said, simply ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to the visitor, not to their companion or support person.

Visitors who have learning disabilities

The term “learning disability” describes a range of information processing disorders that can affect the way a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information. Examples include dyslexia (problems in reading and related language-based learning); dyscalculia (problems in mathematics); and dysgraphia (problems in writing and fine motor skills).

It is important to know that having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning, only that they learn in a different way. Learning disabilities can result in different communication difficulties, which may be subtle, such as difficulty reading, or more pronounced. They can interfere with a visitor’s ability to receive, express or process information, but may nonetheless be difficult to detect. You may not know that a person has a learning disability unless you are told.

Types of assistance visitors may use: alternative technology for writing, calculator, scanning or reading devices, tape recorders, mini pocket recorders.

Interacting/communicating

- When you see that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help.
- Communicate by means of a method that takes into account the visitor’s disability.
- Speak naturally, clearly, and directly to the visitor.
- Allow extra time if necessary – the visitor may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Be patient and willing to explain something again if needed.

Visitors who have speech or language impairments

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult to pronounce words or cause slurring or stuttering. They also may prevent self-expression or the understanding of written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Types of assistance visitors may use: communication board, paper and pen, speech generating device, support person.

Interacting/communicating

- Don't assume that because a person has one disability they also have another. For example, if a visitor has difficulty speaking, it doesn't mean they have an intellectual disability as well.
- Ask the visitor to repeat their information if you don't understand.
- Ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no" if possible.
- Allow enough time to communicate at the visitor's own pace.
- Don't interrupt or finish the visitor's sentences. Wait for them to finish.

Interacting/communicating with people with disabilities over the phone

- Introduce yourself clearly.
- Speak naturally, clearly and directly.
- Don't zone in on how the person's voice sounds. Concentrate on what they are saying.
- Don't interrupt or finish the person's sentences. Give the person time to explain or respond.
- If you don't understand, simply ask again, or repeat or rephrase what you heard and ask if you have understood correctly.
- If the person is using an interpreter or a relay service, speak naturally to the person, not to the interpreter.
- If you encounter a situation where you and the person on the phone cannot communicate with each other effectively due to the customer's disability, consider making alternate arrangements.
- If you cannot complete your interaction, clearly explain what will happen next. Make another appointment for a time when assistance will be available. Leave your contact information in case it will be needed in the meantime.

TBG Volunteer Background Screening

All volunteers who are connected with our children's programs will have an additional vetting process to ensure the safety for our students and to minimize liability to TBG staff and volunteers.

In addition to an interview with the Head, Volunteer Services (or other member of senior TBG staff) volunteers interested in a regular* volunteer role with TBGKids programs will be required to provide TBG with a Toronto Police Service (TPS) "Clearance Check". Details on the TPS check process can be found on <http://www.torontopolice.o.ca/recordsmanagement/clearance.php>.

*"regular" refers to those volunteers who will or intend to be involved with TBGKids programs/Camps on a repeated basis, a minimum of 5 days or longer, in any year.

The TPS check, which usually takes 5-15 days to procure results, should ideally be completed prior to commencing their volunteer role. In the unusual circumstance where a volunteer needs to commence their role prior to the TPS Check results being known, TBG will accept a receipt of application as proof of application until they receive the actual clearance letter.

TBG will reimburse the volunteer for the cost of the TPS check.

Only regular TBGKids volunteers will be eligible to be involved with Camps. However, for TBGKids school programs there may be occasions when last minute volunteer help is needed and these spots filled by other TBG volunteers. In these temporary cover situations where a volunteer has been kind enough to step forward and help out, it is not feasible to require this individual to obtain a TPS check. In these situations the volunteer(s) will be closely supervised by TBGKids staff member at all times.

In addition, new volunteers, regardless of their check status, are not left unsupervised with students at any time during their early volunteer work with TBGKids. On their first day TBG teachers keep a close watch on the new volunteer. If they are deemed inappropriate to continue to work with our student groups their name will be passed back to Head, Volunteer Services for reassignment elsewhere in the organization (where possible and appropriate). If they do well, we will put their details on our TBGKids volunteer contact list to be contacted for future events. TPS checks are deemed valid for a 12 month period after which time they will need to be renewed. It is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure continued renewal as required.

All TPS checks are considered confidential and are kept with the Head, Volunteer Services.

TBG Volunteer Confidentiality Statement

TBG has a strict obligation to keep its staff, members', donors', students', and volunteers' personal and financial information confidential. This is important not only for maintaining their trust in (and support for) TBG, it is also required by Canada's privacy legislation. Any breach of confidentiality could endanger TBG's status as a registered charitable organization. Any volunteer whose role results in access to such confidential personal and financial information is asked to read and sign the TBG confidentiality statement.

Sample Confidentiality Statement:

TBG Volunteer – Confidentiality Statement

Dear,

Toronto Botanical Garden (TBG) has a strict obligation to keep its staff, members', donors', students', and volunteers' personal and financial information confidential.

This is important not only for maintaining their trust in TBG (and their support of TBG!); it is also required by Canada's privacy legislation. Any breach of confidentiality could endanger TBG's status as a registered charitable organization.

Your generous assistance as a volunteer in the [TBG volunteer role] may result in access to such confidential personal and financial information. By accepting this volunteer role, you are agreeing that at all times during and after your volunteer period you will maintain the confidentiality of all information disclosed orally, in writing or electronically during the course of your assistance to TBG.

Please sign and date below to acknowledge that you fully understand and agree to comply with this statement.

Thank you so much for volunteering with Toronto Botanical Garden.

Volunteer

Date

TBG Staff Member

Date

Sample Parental Consent Form for Youth Volunteers

TBG Volunteers Volunteer Waiver

I understand that my child will participate as a volunteer for TBG, specifically with [specify role] but also in [specify additional future volunteer activities such as future TBG special events and educational programs]

I agree that TBG, its trustees, officers, directors, employees, agents and independent contractors shall not be liable for any injury to my child or any loss/damage to my child's personal property arising from, or in any way resulting from, my child's participation in these volunteer activities.

I confirm that I have provided TBG staff with a full account of any health or medical conditions affecting my child. I authorize TBG to administer first aid to my child and to secure medical care for my child in an emergency as deemed appropriate by EMS personnel or attending physician(s).

I acknowledge that I have read this form in full and understand all of its contents, and confirm that I am the parent or legal guardian of the child mentioned herein who is a minor. I confirm that I have the complete custody, care and control of the minor and have the legal authority to agree to this consent and waiver on behalf of the minor and that the consent of no other person or entity is required.

Yes _____ No _____

Parent's Name _____

Child's Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

VOLUNTEER ROLES

There are a wide variety of regular and seasonal volunteer roles, all of which are essential to enable TBG to meet its mission and vision.

These volunteer roles range from helping with adult and children's education to gardening, meet-and-greet roles, specific duties in the library, reception and shop as well as leading tours and helping at special events.

Volunteers are vital to TBG. You don't have to be a horticultural expert to enjoy the satisfaction of being a TBG volunteer, although a passion for gardening and the natural world helps! Previous horticultural or gardening experience may be useful in some of our roles but it is not necessary, as training is available to assist you in developing skills and talents needed for your volunteer role.

This training often takes place by "shadowing" an experienced volunteer in the role, but also includes orientation meetings (for example just before a special event) and written material in manuals for reading. TBG's volunteer office is also there to help make sure your volunteer experience with us is a positive and productive one!

The role and "day in the life of" documents that follow aim to provide the most practical description of what each role entails.

Many of these roles rely on a regular weekly commitment from volunteers; others are more seasonal in nature. All are highly valued by TBG. We simply could not maintain our beautiful gardens and offer our many programs and events without our volunteers!

Thank you



Administration

From time to time opportunities arise to assist a TBG staff member or department or a TBG volunteer committee in an administrative capacity. This could involve event-planning activities, assistance with writing grants or articles, research, helping with accounting tasks, or co-ordination of an activity or event. Occasional help is also needed with office administrative and clerical duties such as database update and management, filing, collating, stuffing envelopes etc.

Some of these roles will be seasonal or special event related; others provide an opportunity for a long-term connection with TBG.

Adult Education Course Ambassadors

TBG Adult Education delivers over 100 courses, workshops, lectures and special events each year in subjects related to gardening and design, botanical arts, floral design, wellness and a healthy environment. Adult Education programs are heavily enrolled by TBG members, but also appeal to interested residents across the GTA. More information on our programs can be found at www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/learn/adult/

Adult Education Course Ambassador: A Day in the Life

Having responded to the email from the Adult Education Coordinator and signed up to monitor a course, you make sure you are at TBG 30 minutes before the course is scheduled to start.

First you go to the room where your course is scheduled to take place and open your course pack in which you find the list of course attendees ready to check off as folks arrive. You will also have information on the course instructor to read through before the course begins.

You also check that the signs to direct students to the classroom have been posted both in the lobby at the bottom of the stairs and at the top of the stairs.

You welcome the instructor, introduce yourself and ensure any of their last-minute needs are looked after (for example: help bring supplies to classroom, assist with a/v equipment).

As students arrive you welcome them and take attendance. You also check if they all have the up-to-date program guide and give one if they do not. You have a supply of membership brochures to distribute as well.

On the evening you are volunteering there may be a couple of folks who are last-minute arrivals (having been told there is still room and to register on the night). You ask them to fill out the registration form (you may have a laptop available so they can do this on-line

- information needed to fill out the registration form is provided on the course attendance sheet), and take their payment (a cash float is provided for you in the course pack).

When the course is about to begin you welcome everyone to TBG and to the course and provide a brief introduction about the course instructor (information in the course pack)

You then assist the instructor as required: for example, running the lights. Most courses will have a short break half way through. During this break you distribute the evaluation forms to each student.

During the course you take notes on your impression of the class: How was the instructor? Did the course meet your expectations as outlined in the program guide? How were the handouts? Etc.

At the end of the course you remind students of the evaluation forms, emphasizing the value placed on their feedback and encouraging them to take the next few minutes before they leave to complete these evaluation forms. In particular you encourage attendees to note interest in future courses/topics.

You thank and say goodbye to each attendee and to the instructor. You assist the instructor with any packing up they may require. The course is now over; your last action is to drop off the course pack in the library drop slot.

It has been an engaging and educational evening and you go home with the satisfaction that you have helped to provide a stellar educational experience to students and a hassle-free teaching experience for instructors.

TBG Kids Education Co-Op Placements, (example from 2013-14)

Overview:

Toronto Botanical Garden children's programs offer year-round recreational and school programs, both indoors and out. Our goal is to foster an appreciation for nature by stimulating children's curiosity through hands-on experiences.

Working closely with the Children's Education team, co-op students support and co-teach programs for elementary school groups (KG to Grade 4). Supporting the Ontario Science and Technology curriculum, our programs cover nature, animals, habitats, plants, and soils. Programs include outdoor components year-round, including regular visits to and hands-on activities in the Teaching Garden. More information on our programs can be found at <http://torontobotanicalgarden.ca/learn/school/> and <http://torontobotanicalgarden.ca/learn/kids/>

Placement students should be able to walk up slopes and stairs comfortably, bend, and reach, and be willing to teach outdoors in all weather conditions.

Responsibilities:

- Delivery of program modules for school programs (October, April to June), the Living Winter program (November to February) and March Break
- Maintenance of programming spaces and live plants and small animals in the James Boyd Children's Centre and the Teaching Garden
- Program support including: program preparation, interactive signage and materials for the Children's Centre, maintaining department files and storage spaces
- Research roles including: environmental topics and educational activities
- Long-term projects would be determined based on programming needs and student's interests

Requirements:

- Interest in working with children, gardening, horticulture, food sustainability, environmental science, and/or nature
- Creativity, patience, flexibility, and a positive attitude
- Ability to work as a member of a team and independently
- Experience working with elementary school children and/or in environmental or outdoor education would be an asset

Hours: Alternating afternoons, 12:30 to 4 p.m.

Training:

Successful applicants will receive training on all program components, teaching techniques, and vegetable gardening basics prior to assisting with programs.

Other Benefits:

An opportunity to gain valuable teaching experience and learn a variety of teaching techniques. Successful interns will receive letters of recommendation if requested. This is an excellent opportunity for those applying to teacher's college, new teachers seeking experience, or retired teachers wishing to stay involved in education.

Volunteer in the Garden: Fact sheet and Day in the Life of

Fact Sheet

Toronto Botanical Garden's Horticulture Department has one orientation session in early spring each year for new volunteers in the garden. Led by the Head Gardener, attending this orientation session is **mandatory** for anyone who wishes to participate as a volunteer in the garden for the TBG. It is for those able to commit to volunteering in the garden for the balance of the gardening season (spring to fall) although we recognize the need to flex to accommodate vacations, family commitments etc.

This orientation is mandatory as it covers key information about the role including the minimum requirements to volunteer and important health and safety information. These are also covered in a handbook specifically for garden volunteers.

After attending the orientation session, and fulfilling the minimum requirements which will be explained in detail during this session, you will be scheduled to volunteer in the garden. This involves selecting the day of your shift for the coming gardening season.

Days for volunteering in the garden are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. You will be asked to pick which day you can commit to regularly. Depending on the number of new volunteer recruits, you may be able to participate weekly, but no less than biweekly. TBG will provide you with a pair of complimentary gloves on your first shift. TBG is also able to provide most tools, but is not able to supply secateurs for everyone; anyone who has a pair should please bring them. Please dress according to weather conditions. It is advisable to dress in appropriate layers, whether hot or cold, as they can easily be removed or added. Please note that it is mandatory to wear closed-toe shoes, such as running shoes or comfortable boots. No flip-flops, sandals or dress shoes will be permitted.

All volunteers in the garden meet at 9.00 am at the straw bale shed for their four-hour shift, ending at 1:00 pm. If you are unable to make your shift, will be late, or can only stay for a portion of the scheduled time, please contact the Head Gardener directly. Volunteers break at 11 am for 30 minutes. Depending on the weather, you may wish to take more frequent, shorter breaks.

All volunteers in the garden report to the Head Gardener who will provide instruction as well as demonstrating the gardening tasks for the day. You may be instructed to perform a number of different tasks in any one of the 17 themed gardens that make up TBG. This will include planting, cutting back, dead-heading, soil amendment, removal of pests, watering, composting, and so on. Of course, weeding is the most regular of regular tasks – there is never an end to the weeding, but weeding is good for the gardening soul!

A very important part of your routine will be keeping track of your volunteer hours in the garden. This will be reviewed by the Head Gardener at the orientation session. In no

time, you will learn the ropes, and we hope to make your time in the garden not only a learning experience, but one that you will look forward to.

A Day in the Life of a Volunteer in the Garden at the TBG

You arrive at the straw bale shed at 9.00am on your day, the day you will be coming on a weekly/biweekly basis for the gardening season. You join your fellow volunteers to receive instruction on the gardening tasks of the day from the Head Gardener.

Before leaving home you checked the weather forecast, and have brought a bottle of water, sunscreen and a hat as it promises to be a hot day! You have brought a couple of layers of clothing for sun protection and you also made sure to wear a pair of comfortable running shoes. You have also brought the gloves you received at the beginning of your volunteer period.

The Head Gardener meets you and your fellow volunteers and provides detailed instructions for the day. Last week it was spring clean-up, this week it is weeding in the Woodland Walk. Your group will be joined by an experienced gardening volunteer who is on hand to provide general guidance and answer questions about the day-to-day, ins and outs, of volunteering in the garden. You set about your gardening reassured that if you have any task-related questions the Head Gardener, and/or Seasonal Staff Gardener, are never too far away to ask.

After a couple of hours the volunteer group takes a break in the volunteer lounge, enjoying a chance to relax, chat, and catch up on the news with group members - and simply to get to know each other. Then it is back out again to finish the work, ending at 1.00 pm. Your last tasks are also important ones: cleaning up and putting away tools and filling in the hours on your volunteer hours log sheet.

You then head home tired but satisfied, knowing that you have made a difference to a garden space and practiced your plant and weed identification skills as well!

Best Gardening: The Horticulture Team!

GARDEN AMBASSADORS

As a TBG Garden Ambassador you will be out in our gardens on hand to greet visitors warmly. You are the face of the organization, animating our gardens to help maximize the visitor experience (and to minimize the amount of questions our volunteer gardeners/reception/shop have to handle!)

Garden Ambassadors are there to offer assistance to our visitors if needed. This may include:

- answering any immediate questions they may have
- directing visitors to areas in the garden/building that might be of most interest to them
- promoting what is on that day/what is in bloom (and where to find it)
- providing more information /brochures if visitors express interest in a TBG program/activity

In addition, you are the eyes and ears for TBG leadership, helping monitor visitor numbers and collecting feedback from visitors.

Skills required: an outgoing personality, good communication skills (listening as well as speaking,) knowledge of and enthusiasm for TBG, a winning smile, comfort with an active, on-your-feet role for a 3-hour shift, able to connect with people with ease and be responsive without being overwhelming.

Time commitment: 3 hour shift.

As a minimum goal it is hoped that TBG will have the benefit of Garden Ambassadors active on days that have special events/activities scheduled and on days with high visitor traffic (weekends from May to October). Eventually, as numbers in the team increase and the role evolves, we hope to have an Ambassador presence in the gardens on weekdays as well.

Weekdays	Weekends
9am – 12pm	10am – 1pm
12pm -3pm	1pm – 4pm
3pm- 6pm	4pm – 7pm

Training for this role will be provided. Volunteers are asked to commit to this role for at least one season (May – October) in order to maximize the benefits of the training and value of continuity in the role.

Day in life of a Library Volunteer

Circulation Desk Volunteer

You arrive for your 3-hour volunteer shift in the TBG Library, which for you is 10.00 am on a Tuesday. Your fellow library volunteers cover other 3 or 4 hour shifts ensuring the library can be open from 10 to 4pm on weekdays and between 12 and 4 pm on weekends.

Upon arrival you check in with TBG's Library Manager and say hello to your volunteer colleague who is looking after the Reception desk alongside you. Next, you open the Library for the day, which includes turning on the public computer workstations, unlocking and opening the Library doors, and checking the book drop for any materials that have been returned overnight.

This morning you find there are several email enquiries that require a response. These typically involve renewing a patron's books, searching the catalogue to locate library materials, and answering the email query.

During the next few hours several visitors have queries you can assist with, for example:

"How long can I take this book out for?"

"Can I renew it if I need to?"

"When is it due back?"

"I'm looking for a book by...on... titled...can you help me?"

"How can I borrow books from this Library?"

You also assist two members to borrow books using the online circulation system to record the loan details and stamp the due date to ensure the member knows when the books are due back.

You also have time to process two payments from a recent book sale. This entails counting and collecting money, and providing change. You also assist the Library Manager by creating a book display of the Library's newest titles.

At the end of your shift you make sure that the afternoon volunteer has arrived, and if you were in the middle of a project, let the next volunteer know at which stage you left it. If your shift was at the end of the day you make sure to close the library, following proper procedures, and let the Library Manager know you are finished your shift.

Volunteer cataloguers:

You arrive for your volunteer shift. Today it is 1p.m. to 4 p.m. for a specific cataloguing task. Previous shifts have started at 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. on a weekday. There is also the option to come in on weekends between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to help out. Time commitments for cataloguers are flexible depending on the cataloguing project underway, and so they can take place anytime during library hours (Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 12 to 4 p.m.).

In your cataloguing role you are responsible for performing traditional cataloguing of library materials, adhering to AACR2 and MARC standards. Today you are cataloguing a collection of 15 new books that have been donated to the library.

You use the library's web-based integrated library system (Koha) to perform original or derived cataloguing of books, serials, and some audiovisual collections (e.g. DVDs, audiobooks, etc.).

It is a steady role and you enjoy the congenial surroundings and the interaction with fellow volunteers. It is also a very satisfying role enabling you to use your expertise and keep up to date with state of the art web based library systems. At the end of your shift you check in with the Head Librarian to share your progress.

A Day in the Life of a Reception Volunteer

Morning Shift

You arrive at 9:00 am in time for the start of your shift. You turn on the lights, unlock cupboards and take out the Reception information binder and Program Guide Binder, regular activities to get the reception desk ready for the day.

You take the time to read any vital update information that has been posted in the Reception information binder. Next you take care of phone messages (this usually takes up to 30 minutes). Enquiries can range from wanting to know about the status of a course sign up – “is there still room” to “How do I become a member?” “I want to renew my membership”, “What are your hours of opening?” “I would like to come on a tour” etc. You respond to these enquiries either directly (if you know the answer) or make sure you connect with the relevant TBG staff member to pass the enquiry on.

Having looked after the phone messages, you turn your attention to the emails. You take the necessary action depending on the topic. This could be:

- Forward queries to the relevant TBG staff member
- Reply to general questions regarding TBG programs, events, membership, lecture series, shop, location etc.
- Research questions regarding various horticultural societies, Toronto parks and Toronto amenities from out-of-towners. We receive requests from as far away as California
- Read all messages left in the days following your last shift (this is a useful way of not only catching up but keeping up to date on the latest news).

During your shift the lobby is busy with an event taking place in the Floral Hall as well as a Children’s Education event in the Children’s Centre. As TBG staff arrive you record them as in on the attendance board.

On previous days you have helped visitors with providing a wheelchair (following the sign-out procedure for this) and today you provide several visiting families with Hike-in-a-Bag packs (taking the rental fee and logging the pack out, then in again upon its return). You also sign up two walk-ins and 3 phone-ins for programs and membership and deliver applications and payment to relevant TBG staff members. Other activities you typically get involved with include:

- Answer Library phone when librarian is away from the desk or unavailable
- Forward messages to the Master Gardener desk
- Sign for courier delivered packages for TBG staff and Canada Blooms

You keep a running summary of information for the afternoon receptionist (including who is in, who away, when they are coming back etc)

It has been a busy morning with lots of interaction with people and a variety of administrative work; time has flown by! You make sure you fill in the afternoon volunteer when they arrive for their shift. Then you leave with the satisfaction that you have helped provide a welcoming and professional face for TBG and helped a range of people with enquiries.

A Day in life of a Garden Shop Volunteer

You arrive at 9.45 am for your 3 hour volunteer shift in the Garden Shop, which for you start at 10:00 am. Your fellow TBG shop volunteers cover other 3 or 4 hour shifts ensuring the Shop can be open from 10 am to 4 pm daily (7 days a week). You have remembered to wear your name tag so that customers can know you by name.

Since you are the first morning shift volunteer to arrive you collect the key for the Shop from Reception, open the doors and then make sure you return the key to Reception ready for the next volunteer who needs it. Your fellow TBG volunteer arrives minutes later and you put on a TBG apron (optional) and then sort out who does what task to have the Shop ready for customers. These next tasks include:

- 1) Collecting the cash float from its assigned place, counting the float (checking against previous days sign-off amount), and then placing the cash in the cash drawer. If there are any anomalies with the float you make a note of these for the Accountant.
- 2) Making sure the shop lights are on and radio is on loud enough for customers to hear clearly throughout the Shop, and doing a quick check around the Shop together taking note of any new Shop arrangements or new products. Log in and read /review all messages on the terminal. Review the TBG Weekly Schedule that is posted on the wall.
- 3) Your final activity is to move the display items to the outer entrance of the Shop. These can vary with the season (for example bulbs in the spring). With these checks and set up activities done, you are ready and well prepared for customers from 10.00 am!

During this particular shift the Shop has a steady stream of visitors you greet with a friendly “good morning” and a smile. Record each person who enters with the ‘clicker.’ You wander through the Shop asking open-ended questions and assisting customers in making their purchases with your product knowledge. You move through the Shop looking for product to restock as necessary.

You are regularly assisting customers with their credit card or cash purchases, wrapping/packaging their items, stapling their receipt to the bill, making sure they have everything they need. To be eco-conscious, you ask the customer if they have a bag or can take the purchase without a bag.

When visitors are browsing and during quiet periods there are a number of activities to keep you busy. If the phone rings you answer “Garden Shop, Toronto Botanical Garden” and endeavour to help the caller with their query. There are also messages left on the phone that you need to pick up and follow through on. This may simply be leaving a message for the Shop Supervisor or responding to the caller’s question yourself. Typical questions include:

“Do you sell?” “What hours are you open?” “Can I speak with (name) shop supervisor?”

For this latter enquiry you would save the message and either let the Shop Supervisor know if she is in that day or send her a message through the terminal advising there is a message waiting for her.

Other activities to look after will be determined by the season/products/ instructions left by the Shop Supervisor but can include:

Checking to see if any of the live plants need watering; ensuring general tidiness of the Shop (i.e.: sweeping); making sure there is a good supply of bags and tissue paper at the cashier counter, restocking some displays if they are obviously in need of more product (i.e.: honey shelf).

Some of these activities may entail heading down the stairs to the basement storage area to source new supplies.

You also make sure you consult the Shop Manual to make sure any new procedures/updates are noted. When you first began your shifts, shadowing an experienced volunteer for several days, you read through this manual every time to become familiar with standard procedures, for example what to do with returns, gift certificates etc. You also keep on top of TBG news and upcoming events because visitors often ask general questions as you are the first TBG representative they meet upon arrival in the building.

When the Shop is quiet you briefly leave your fellow volunteer to take a break and grab a coffee from the kitchen upstairs.

At the end of your shift you and your fellow volunteer greet the afternoon volunteers who arrive by 12:45 to have time for a handover of any outstanding / on-going activities before their shift begins.

If your shift is in the afternoon from 1 to 4 PM, you arrive by 12:45 PM and get any updates/instructions from the AM team. Your activities are identical to the AM shift's when greeting and assisting our customers. At the end of the day at 4 PM, bring in any displays that are outside the Shop. Place the Closed sign in front of the doors and lock the doors.

You will do the cash count closing process and complete the Cash Float Sheet. Any cash excess over daily Float of \$200.00 is removed and placed in the daily sales bag along with all credit card and debit sales slips (separated by Visa, MasterCard, or Debit). The Cash Float sheet is printed, two copies. One copy is placed in daily sales bag. The second copy is placed in green Float bag with the \$200.00 prepared for the next day. The Float bag is placed in its assigned place and locked. The Sales bag is dropped into vault. The closing routine usually takes 15 minutes.

You will then turn off all lights in the basement and in the shop, and the radio. You write a note of any instructions/messages that may be necessary for next team or supervisor.

You exit by back door and make sure the door is completely closed before you walk away.

It has been a busy morning or afternoon with lots of interaction with people and a variety of administrative work; time has flown by! You leave with the satisfaction that you have helped provide a welcoming and professional face for TBG, helped a range of people with enquiries and purchases, and helped a valued group make a useful contribution to TBG.



A Day in the Life of a Special Event Volunteer

Having seen the communication from TBG's volunteer office, you note that an upcoming special event needs volunteer help. You can make that day and time, and from the role description it looks like one you could do well and enjoy! You sign up for your spot, (picking a morning shift of 3 hours), following the link to the sign-up site for the event and you make a note in your diary.

Since this is a big special event there is an orientation meeting, so you sign up for this as well. You receive a reminder email the day before the orientation meeting and you head over to TBG. You join a group of fellow volunteers and hear more detailed information about the event, TBG's activity there and your specific role. Everyone is very upbeat and excited about this event and you leave enthusiastic and looking forward to the day itself.

You receive a reminder email a day before the event and make sure you are there on time (just before 10.00 am) to check in with the TBG staff member you are helping. Since this is an outdoor event and you will be standing for most of the time, you checked the weather report and brought comfortable shoes and some snacks/water with you.

Upon arrival you are given a warm and grateful welcome, a TBG name tag and a TBG apron to wear. The TBG booth is looking great and you are able to help with some final set-up activities (for example, arranging brochures and magazines in eye-catching displays and unpacking the final pots of honey).

The morning starts slowly, with visitors to the event trickling in. This gives you time to fully orient yourself to the material on display, see where everything is located and refresh your memory on some key facts about TBG (so you are ready for any questions!). From mid morning to the end of your shift at 1.00 pm the TBG booth is buzzing with activity! You really enjoy chatting with the many visitors, handing out brochures, answering questions and even making a few sales. You were surprised at how many people did not know much about TBG and you particularly enjoyed interacting with the young children who were drawn to the booth by the honey display. You helped re-stock the displays twice during the morning and were continually maintaining the booth material in a tidy, eye-catching lay-out. Time just flew by! When your replacement for the afternoon arrives you take a few minutes to help orient him/her to the site, what is where, the most popular items and frequently asked questions etc; then you hand over your apron, and go mingle at the event for yourself.

It was a busy but very enjoyable 3 hours. You lost count of the number of people you interacted with, you learned some interesting facts yourself as well and you really felt you made a useful contribution. Oh, and you remembered to remove your name tag for the journey home (!)

TBG Tour Guides: Toronto Botanical Garden/Music Garden/Allan Gardens: general public and private groups.

As a TBG Tour Guide you will create one of the first ways the public gains an impression of the Toronto Botanical Garden. As such, we are proud to be able to work with our guides to provide excellence in service and public education.

Responsibilities of a Tour Guide

- Provide polite, courteous and friendly tour experiences for the public;
- Study materials given as each tour will include plant identification, basic botany, the enhancement of the goals and values of TBG and other related topics;
- Lead tours using provided materials, previously studied;
- Interact with different groups and their questions, as each tour is unique;
- If applicable, collect fees; we are moving towards client prepayment by credit card;
- Keep up to date on what is happening in and around TBG. Study new tour learning materials as they are developed and made available. Where possible attend tour guide meetings for education and update;
- New guides will shadow at least 3 tours with an experienced guide;
- Experienced guides will lead at least two tours a month during the main tour season (usually mid-May to end-September for TBG, June to September for Music Garden, November to March for Allan Gardens (negotiable on a case by case basis);
- If unable to make the tour assigned, find a replacement tour guide (a contact list for guides is provided and will be updated should changes occur); and
- Keep the Head, Volunteer Services apprised promptly of any changes, issue or difficulties, and provide any salient feedback from tour experience.

Benefits of volunteering as a Tour Guide

- Personal satisfaction of learning about gardening, plants, history, music, and what is going on at TBG and using that knowledge;
- Interaction with groups of visitors, receiving thanks from participants- most are very grateful and amazed at the gardens, a very pleasant experience for all;
- Helping with administration, development training and marketing materials;
- Opportunity to tour at various sites; and
- Networking with other Tour Guides

Skills required for a Tour Guide

- Excellent people skills – able to connect with people with ease; the number one requirement is the guide must like people!;
- Flexibility: each group is different so flexibility is key while still keeping true to tour guide materials;
- Knowledge: a general love of the garden is all a tour guide needs to get started. Willingness to work as a team member in all meetings and projects involved (e.g. tours, script revisions, outings, etc);

- Commitment to grow, develop and succeed at all TBG tours and events in which you are involved; and
- Enthusiasm for TBG, a winning smile, comfort with an active, on-your-feet role.

The Toronto Botanical Garden expects all employees and volunteers to ensure that their personal interests do not in any way conflict with or appear to conflict with their tour guide duties and obligations to the TBG.

A Day in the Life of a Volunteer Tour Guide

Although every group is different, from groups of seniors to school-age students, ESL groups to corporate groups and visiting horticultural societies, the narrative below tries to capture some common experiences as a tour guide.

Having signed up to lead a tour, you have some information ahead of time (number in group, type of group, whether there are any special needs or request for a particular theme to the tour). Also the fact that they have booked the one hour tour of TBG (not the 90-minute tour of TBG plus a segment of Edwards Gardens).

You read through the tour script again to refresh your memory. (many tour guides make notes on prompt cards, capturing the main points of note about each garden space.) You also check “What’s in Bloom” on the TBG website and “Paul’s Picks” as these are the plants you are most likely to get questions about. You arrive at TBG 30 minutes before the tour start time; remembering to bring your name badge with you and dressing appropriately for the forecasted weather conditions (tours take place rain or shine!). You take a quick walk around the gardens so you are up to date on what is in bloom, where some “special” spots are, any new developments in the garden plantings. You also look at the displays in the planter.

At the tour’s start time you are on hand at the entrance to the building, ready to greet the group as they arrive. You know the name of the group contact; having introduced yourself, you wait until the group has assembled ready to start the tour. You know that they are paying by credit card so there is no need to collect cash or cheque payments this time.

These are now “your group” for the next 60 minutes. Having introduced yourself to the group, welcomed them to Toronto Botanical Garden, and confirmed the time the tour will take, you then cover the script for the entrance walkway.

In situations where there is a large group being shared among several tour guides you will have conferred with your colleagues to determine who takes which route with their group, to avoid overlaps along the way!

You then lead your group through the various gardens, judging your walking speed to fit that of the group. At the various stopping points you pause to ensure all are gathered around and can hear you speak. (If you have a quiet speaking voice you may wish to borrow a microphone from the volunteer office.)

It is a pleasant and leisurely stroll for one hour with this group. They show lots of interest and provide much praise for what they see along the way. You ensure they see

what is currently in bloom (and encourage them to visit again at different times of the year!). You judge the interest level of the group and impart some history of the building/gardens or more information on environmental practices along the way. A couple of people show particular interest in specific plants and you assist them locate the relevant plant labels to confirm ID.

After an enjoyable hour you end back where you started, reminding them of the Garden Shop and the rotating art exhibits in the library that they can also see at their leisure if they wish. You thank them for visiting TBG and encourage them to come back soon!

If this tour was a free (pay what you can) tour of TBG you would end near a donation machine and encourage visitors to consider making a small donation, “If you have enjoyed this tour please consider making a small donation to help TBG maintain these beautiful gardens and wonderful programs! Thank you.”

It has been an enjoyable and absorbing hour; time has flown by! The group are all smiles and thanks and you say goodbye to them with the satisfaction that you have helped provide a welcoming and educational experience for a charming group of people.



Tour Guide: School Groups

Overview:

Toronto Botanical Garden offers year-round recreational and school programs both indoors and out. Our goal is to foster an appreciation for nature by stimulating children's curiosity through hands-on experiences. Our school tours program is focused on bringing students in grades 5-12 to the TBG for themed tours.

We need tour guides who are interested in educating and inspiring youth through garden tours and botanical interpretation.

Tailored to school groups, each tour has unique subject matter varying by grade that links with provincial curriculum guidelines. Topics of tours include:

- Food Sustainability
- Biodiversity
- EcoTour
- Botany and Biology.

These tours are led through TBG's gardens and link the work being done in these gardens with the themes of each grade.

Students will gain a better understanding of how the gardens, plants, building design and surrounding environment are connected to their studies in the classroom and leave participants with take-home actions that can sustain a healthy future for all.

Training:

Scripts for each tour are written, training on all tour components including teaching techniques will be provided.

Requirements:

This volunteer role would appeal to:

- Those who are interested in working with school age children, gardening, horticulture, food sustainability, environmental science and/or nature.
- A self-motivated individual with a strong commitment to teaching/developing youth.
- A passion for gardening, horticulture or nature and knowledge of the industry are assets.

Skills needed:

- Excellent people skills – able to connect with and engage school age children - experience working with school age children and/or environmental or outdoor education would be an asset;
- Flexibility: each group is different so flexibility is key, while still keeping true to tour guide materials;
- Creativity, patience, and a positive attitude;
- Ability to work as a member of a team and independently;
- Commitment to grow, develop and succeed at all TBG tours and events in which you are involved; and
- Enthusiasm for TBG, a winning smile, comfort with an active, outdoors, on-your-feet role (tour guide volunteers should be able to comfortably walk up slopes and steps, and be willing to tour outdoors in all weather conditions).

Benefits: in addition to the many benefits of volunteering with TBG, this role has specific benefits:

- Training in the subject matter and personal satisfaction of learning new topics and using that knowledge;
- Interaction with school groups, a fun and dynamic experience; and
- Networking with other Tour Guides and TBG Education professionals

Time Commitment:

This is a seasonal volunteer position that is flexible in nature. The role is active during the school year. During this period the individual will need to be available for training and leading up to 3-4 tours per month. Tours are of 1 hour duration so a commitment (after time on training) of 3-4 hours per month.

Tours will usually take place on weekdays mid-morning to mid-afternoon.

TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Please complete and return: **Fax:** 416-397-1354

Mail: Toronto Botanical Garden,

777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto, ON, M3C 1P2 attn:

Volunteers

Email: tourguides@torontobotanicalgarden.ca

Date _____

Name _____ **Address** _____

City _____ **Postal Code** _____ **Email Address** _____

Phone (home) _____ **(business)** _____ **(cell)** _____

Emergency Contact _____ **Phone** _____

Are you currently a TBG Member? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you hear about the Toronto Botanical Garden? _____

My Educational and/or Work Background: -----

My previous Volunteer experience: -----

Availability (please be very specific, giving days of week, times etc): -----

I am interested in volunteering for the following: (please check as many as are applicable. However we would appreciate it if you could rate your level of interest, 1 being your first choice, 2 your second choice ... and so on) **Training will be provided for all positions. Some of our positions require a minimum of six months volunteer commitment. Please see back of form for job descriptions.**

☐ **Adult Programs** (assisting with courses and lectures)

☐ **Children's Programs** (Summer Day Camps, Fall/Winter Programs, Special Events, Office Support)

☐ **Gardening** ☐ **Garden Ambassador** ☐ **Library** ☐ **Reception**

☐ **Special Events** ☐ **Tour Guides - public/private groups** ☐ **Tour Guides – school groups**

☐ **Garden Shop**

☐ **Other** _____

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at the Toronto Botanical Garden. Someone will contact you soon to schedule an interview and discuss your participation in our Volunteer Programs

Adult Programs: requires organizational and communication skills

- assisting with gardening lectures (generally held from 7:30-9:30 pm midweek) by setting out food, selling tickets, giving out information to participants
- assisting with adult courses – generally in the evening from 7:30-9:30 during the week and occasionally on weekends. Take attendance, hand out and collect evaluation forms, assist teacher.

Children's Programs: requires ability to relate to children of varying ages, good communication skills, patience, and creativity. Can be physically demanding. Ideal for applicants for Teacher's College or former teachers.

- Assist coordinators to manage a variety of programs for pre-school and elementary school children.

In the Garden: (seasonal from May to end September) ability to bend, reach, stand and work with gardening tools, take direction and instruction from staff or designated senior volunteers.

- garden maintenance and planting. Required to commit to one half day per week (Tue, Wed or Thur) for minimum of 3 month period (April, May & June and/or July, August & September)

Garden Ambassador: (seasonal from May to October) An outdoor, on your feet, roving role meeting and greeting visitors, answering their questions and ensuring their visitor experience is as positive as possible. Requires good communication skills and ability to absorb and keep up to date with ever changing information. 3 hour shifts on flexible schedule with focus on weekends and special event dates.

Library: organizational skills, some library background or education preferred

- assist librarian with a variety of duties
- assist the public

Reception: requires excellent communication skills, good phone manner, computer skills and the ability to absorb ever-changing information. Regular half-day shifts or backup positions available.

Special Events: represent TBG at a variety of special events both at TBG and other locations in the city. Shifts are between 3-6 hours depending on the event, some are outdoors on your feet roles others stationed at a TBG booth at an event. Wide variety of roles from meet and greet, to visitor registration, to helping with set up/pack up. Requires outgoing personality, good communication skills and ideally able to commit to help at more than one event per year.

Tour Guides: must be able to walk on uneven surfaces and deal effectively with groups.

- leading scheduled tours (1 – 1.5 hours) to the visiting member of the public (& pre booked private groups) in the TBG gardens, Edwards Gardens, the Toronto Music Garden and/or Allan Gardens.
- leading scheduled curriculum related tours to school groups (grades 5-11). Tour content linked to curriculum for botany, biology, biodiversity, food sustainability and horticultural sustainability (Eco tours).

Garden Shop: Serving visitor, assisting with displays and restocking. Requires good communication & customer service skills, ability to work with cash and computerized system. Opportunity to help with visual merchandizing.

- Work half-day shifts (partnering with another volunteer) either on a regular basis or as back-up.
- Full training provided, requires minimum 6 month commitment

Other: Opportunities occasionally arise to serve on committees (putting together special events), help TBG depts. with office administrative work, assist with marketing or Trellis magazine (writers, proofreaders, graphic design).